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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8734
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RUEHHS/ASEAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0243

UNCLAS HANOI 001266

SENSITIVE
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FOR EAP/MLS (SCHEIBE AND BLACKSHAW)

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: VIETNAM RESISTS CALL FOR ASEAN MEMBERS TO PRESSURE BURMA

REF: A) STATE 121418, B) HANOI 1248

1. (SBU) In a November 17 conversation with MFA DDG for Asian Affairs Ta Duy Chinh, DPolCouns expressed U.S. indignation at the Burmese regime's recent convictions of lawyers and democracy activists, the continuing house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, and the junta's refusal to engage in genuine political dialogue. Per ref A, he urged Vietnam to make use of its comparatively warm relations with Burma to press for real progress on the issues raised in the 2007 UNSC Presidential statement, including the release of political prisoners, and reiterated U.S. calls (ref B) not to support a no-action motion on Burma at the UN Third Committee. Absent concrete movement, media coverage of the upcoming ASEAN Summit in Chiang Mai would almost certainly be dominated by the Burma issue, he emphasized.

2. (SBU) DDG Chinh promised to pass along the substance of the demarche to his superiors, but otherwise gave little ground. He conceded that a lack of progress on Burma continues to impede the development of U.S.-ASEAN ties; however, he insisted that the onus was on the United States and EU to "build trust." ASEAN, he contended, shares Vietnam's view that sanctions on Burma have been ineffectual, even counterproductive. DDG Chinh implored the West to take a "broader view" of the situation, arguing that a hard-line approach simply served to "push Burma into the arms of the Chinese." DDG Chinh affirmed that Vietnam has counseled Burma to take steps to open up -- as Vietnam itself did two decades ago -- but declined to identify any concrete measures the GVN had advised Burma to take.